

### **In the Claims:**

Please amend the Claims as follows and without prejudice. This listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

### **Listing of Claims**

1. (Previously Presented) A method for facilitating secure communications among at least two parties over a communication network, comprising:

retaining a first private key and transmitting a corresponding first initial public key and synchronizing indicator;

using a received second public key and second synchronizing indicator in combination with said retained first private key to determine, and retain, a first encryption key;

determining a second private key, a third public key and a third synchronizing indicator, wherein said second private key is retained with said first retained private key;

encrypting at least said third synchronizing indicator using said first encryption key;

transmitting said third public key and encrypted third synchronizing indicator;

decrypting a received fourth synchronizing indicator using said first encryption key; and

determining a second encryption key from said second private key, a fourth public key and said decrypted fourth synchronizing indicator, wherein said second encryption key is retained with said first encryption key.

2. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1 wherein said determining a next private key and a next information item set, encrypting at least one element of said next information item set, transmitting said encrypted next information element, decrypting said received encrypted information item element; and, determining a next encryption key from said next private key and said decrypted information item are repeated until a known number of encryption keys are determined.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the step of encrypting further comprises: selecting at least one of said retained encryption keys alternatively.

6. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of encrypting further comprises: selecting a known encryption key.

7. (Original) The method as recited in claim 6 wherein said known encryption key is such that an output value is the same as an input value.

8. (Original) The method as recited in claim 5 wherein said encryption keys are selected in a known sequence.

9. (Original) The method as recited in claim 8 wherein said known sequence corresponds to an order of retention of said encryption keys.

10. (Original) The method as recited in claim 8 wherein said known sequence corresponds to an order pre-selected by said parties.

Claims 11 - 28. (Cancelled)

Claim 29. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein said synchronizing indicators correspond to select bit positions.